

# THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

## New Safety Advisory on 15-Passenger Vans Issued

Fifteen-passenger vans are more likely to be involved in a single-vehicle rollover crash than any other type of vehicle. In response, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has issued an updated safety advisory on these vehicles. The good news is that such consumer alerts and educational efforts are apparently working to help reduce fatalities in 15-passenger van rollover crashes. The proof is in the numbers: The percent of 15-passenger van occupant fatalities that occur as a result of rollover crashes is down from a high of 81% in 2000 to 52% in 2003. Still, more needs to be done to alert operators of these vehicles' high center of gravity — particularly when fully loaded — and their increased chance of rollover. NHTSA is continuing to work to get the word out about this increased rollover risk, as well as what can be done to mitigate it.

Operators of 15-passenger vans need to be informed about how to reduce rollover risks, avoid potential dangers, and better protect occupants in the event of a rollover crash. NHTSA recommends the following 15-passenger van safety precautions:

- **Keep your passenger load light.** NHTSA research has shown that 15-passenger vans have a rollover risk that increases dramatically as the number of occupants increases from fewer than five to more than ten. In fact, 15-passenger vans (with 10 or more occupants) had a rollover rate in single vehicle crashes that is nearly three times the rate of those that were lightly loaded.
- **Check your van's tire pressure frequently - at least once a week.** A just-released NHTSA

study found that 74% of all 15-passenger vans had improperly inflated tires. By contrast, 39% of passenger cars had improperly inflated tires. Improperly inflated tires can change handling characteristics, increasing the prospect of a rollover crash in 15-passenger vans.

- **Require all occupants to use their seat belts or the appropriate child restraint.** Nearly 80% of those who have died nationwide in 15-passenger vans were not buckled up. Wearing seat belts dramatically increases the chances of survival during a rollover crash.

- **If at all possible, seat passengers & place cargo forward of the rear axle and avoid placing any loads on the roof.** By following these guidelines, you'll lower the vehicle's center of gravity and lower the chance of a rollover crash.

- **Be mindful of speed and road conditions.** The analysis of 15-passenger van crashes also shows that the risk of rollover increases significantly at speeds over 50 miles per hour and on curved roads.

NHTSA has developed an informative hangtag that can be attached to the rear view mirror of 15-passenger vans that remind drivers of these safety precautions. These hangtags will be sent to units that operate 15-passenger vans. The hooks on the hangtag are perforated so they can be removed, leaving a bilingual brochure or a poster when it's unfolded.

For more information, as well as the latest NHTSA research and analysis, please visit the agency's web site at: [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov). Extra hangtags/brochures can also be ordered at no cost by contacting NHTSA's Vehicle Safety Hotline directly at **888-327-4236**.

**What's your OPERATION CAPSAFE suggestion?**



CAP Safety Team

Lt Lyle E. Letteer, Jr., CAP/SE  
w4ke@mindspring.com

Maj Karen L. DeMars, GLR/SE  
kdemars@jamdata.net

Lt Col Hank Hernandez, MER/SE  
HHdz@cox.net

Lt Col Bruce Brown, NER/SE  
ebbrowjr@verizon.net

Col John Rooney, NCR/SE  
jrooney@omni-tech.net

Lt Col Harold W. Jaynes, PCR/SE  
wallyjaynes@hawaiian.net

Lt Col Donald Johanson, RMR/SE  
johansondon@earthlink.net

Maj Ernest C. Manzano, SER/SE  
emanzano@bellsouth.net

Maj Chuck Farry, SWR/SE  
ramprat51@juno.com

Gary K. Woodsmall, HQ CAP/SE, Editor

Phone: 888-211-1812 ext 350

Fax: 800-555-7902

safety@cap.gov

HQ Civil Air Patrol/SE

105 South Hansell Street

Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6332

## Non-Standard Airport Traffic Patterns

Courtesy of Lt Col Pete Kalisky, HQ CAP/DOV

Recently, a CFI (also a CAP member) was instructing a student in the traffic pattern of a local non-towered airport. There was also another student in the standard left-hand pattern at the time. While taxiing back for another takeoff, the instructor heard the following: "CAP Flight XXXX, 5 mile extended right base for runway XX." The CAP aircraft then proceed to fly as announced in the face of traffic that was forced to adjust for the non-standard pattern. After the CAP Flight landed, and the lessons/debrief were complete, the student pilots expressed their amazement to the instructor over the non-standard actions of the CAP aircraft and questioned the CAP flight's commitment to safety. Not only was safety compromised, but the CAP Flight call sign, and hence the CAP name, got negative publicity with two fledgling pilots and the instructor.

***Please review the AIM, para. 4-3-3, and adhere to safe operating practices.***



"**Stop Static**" is a safety campaign developed by the Petroleum Equipment Institute (PEI), which is intended to increase public awareness of the potential danger posed by the discharge of static electricity during refueling.

### **Cell Phones Are Not At Fault**

PEI has investigated hundreds of refueling fires and flare-ups and have not documented one single incident that was caused by a cellular telephone. PEI began investigating mysterious refueling fires in the mid-Nineties. They learned that static electricity – the same thing that shocks you after dragging your feet across the carpet – can ignite gasoline vapors at the pump. Their research determined that a buildup of static electricity can be generated by many different sources. PEI documented fires caused by plastic gas cans, nylon windbreakers and, possibly most dangerous of all, human nature. The common thread in a substantial number of these accidents was that the victims got back in their cars. They have made their findings available at:

<http://www.pei.org/static/index.htm#links>

## PEI's Three Rules for Safe Refueling While Filling Up...

**Turn Off Engine**

**Don't Smoke**

**Never Re-Enter Your Vehicle**



## Aircraft Repairs Cost Big Bucks

Last year, CAP aircraft that were damaged cost a whopping **\$293,000** to repair. This does not include the C-182 that was totally destroyed in Monroe, LA.

More recently (during the last two weeks), a CAP C-172s taxied into a parked Gulfstream IV business jet and a personally-owned Piper Cherokee. How did this happen?

CAPR 60-1 guidance for ground and taxi operations is – "Pilots will maintain adequate clearance from all obstacles during all ground operations. When taxiing within 10 feet of any obstacle, pilots shall bring the aircraft to a complete halt, and then proceed at a pace not to exceed a slow walk until clear of the obstacle." When confronted with tight quarters during ground operations, remember you have options - slow down, use a marshaller, stop, shutdown, push it, tow it, taxi somewhere else, let the FBO move it – just don't hit anything. Taxi clearance needs to be a continuing operations emphasis item. So far this year, 6 aircraft mishaps have involved ground handling or taxiing into obstructions. All of these are preventable mishaps. We are wasting limited maintenance dollars to repair these aircraft. **WE NEED YOUR UNDIVIDED ATTENTION** to fix this plaguing problem.

## Chief of Safety Signs Off

After 10 years of serving as CAP Chief of Safety, fiscal constraints and subsequent staff reductions have resulted in the abolishment of my position. Col Lyle Letteer, Jr., the volunteer National Safety Officer, will continue the safety vigil along with all of the dedicated safety advocates I've had the pleasure of working with along the way. Keep the shiny side up and the rubber side down! Remember, safety is no accident.